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can be more ridiculous than the long solos, duets, and trios, expressive of the most intense love, rage, and despair, cut bodily out of operas, merely to suit the voice or dramatic power of certain vocalists? As well might we read isolated chapters from books, and expect that an audience should enter into the passions and feelings of characters of whom they know nothing but the names.

It may be said that reforms like these cannot be worked out whilst a popular audience desires to have operatic scraps, and would willingly sit through a programme lasting until midnight; but this is merely ministering to an unformed taste, and playing down to the people, instead of raising them up to you. We know that country visitors, for instance, rush to these "Monster Concerts," because they want to see every eminent artist in one night, so that they can make it appear to their friends, on their return, that they have made the round of operas and concerts during their stay in the metropolis; but we do not therefore believe that these annual shows should be perpetuated, nor do we think that they ever produce the slightest feeling for true art amongst the audience. Indeed, the general impression of these performances appears to be summed up in the remark made in our hearing during the last season—"they are fatiguing, but cheap."

"*Multum in parvo*" concerts like these may bring present money to those who institute them; but the same reason has been too often assigned in support of many of the abuses connected with our public entertainments which have since been remedied, to the honour and profit of those who have had the courage to carry out the reforms. Into this question, therefore, it will be unnecessary now to enter. We have in these remarks but one object in view:—to support the highest interests of art, and to aid in educating the public taste to its due appreciation.

WORCESTER AND NORWICH FESTIVALS.

THE Festivals of Worcester and Norwich have this year derived additional interest from the production of two oratorios—one entirely new to the public, and the other having only once been heard during the last season at Exeter Hall. The attention bestowed upon these compositions by every artist concerned in their performance, and the large audiences assembled on each occasion, must amply prove—if proof were wanting—how zealously the members of the profession will work to render justice to a new composer, and how willingly the public will come forth to welcome him.

The attendance at Worcester during the four days of the Festival, commencing on the 8th of September, exceeded by nearly two thousand that of the corresponding days in 1860; a result satisfactorily showing that the love of music and the cause of charity—so long linked in affectionate brotherhood—have rather increased than diminished with the lapse of time.

The Festival was opened on Tuesday with a fine performance of *Elijah*, and the next day was devoted to Mozart's *Requiem*, Beethoven's *Engedi*, or *David in the Wilderness*, (Mount of Olives), and Mendelssohn's *Hymn*

of *Praise*—a programme so long as to weary the attention even of the most zealous worshipper of these great composers.

On the third day, Herr Schachner's Oratorio, *Israel's Return from Babylon*, was produced, the principal singers being Madlle. Tietjens, Miss Palmer, Mr. Sims Reeves, and Mr. Santley.

We cannot say that the composer of this work has had a gracious task to perform in setting to music a *libretto* utterly destitute of human interest; and we must therefore give him credit for having to a certain extent overcome the difficulty, by endeavouring to invest the four parts, into which the work is divided, with a certain distinctive dramatic feeling.

The first part, "Captivity," opens with a short Alto Recitative, leading to an instrumental introduction, the plan of which is, we presume, borrowed from *Elijah*. An Air, Recitative, and Chorus follow, in which the key of E minor is painfully impressed upon the ear—the Tenors and Basses aiding the monotony by holding on the E in unison throughout the chorus; so that, in spite of the modulations given to the brass instruments, we feel a sense of relief when the key-note has finally died away. A Baritone air, with a flowing semiquaver accompaniment, leads to the Chorus, "War against Babylon," which concludes the first part.

In the second part, "Deliverance," we certainly experience a sensation of joy in escaping from the constant prevalence of the minor key; and the Tenor air, "Praise the Lord," seems bright and refreshing, if only from contrast. In the Chorus, "Sound the loud timbrel," we have some effective writing, and an unexpected transition from C to A flat, which same device is strangely enough repeated in the succeeding Soprano solo. The Tenor and Baritone duet, "The Lord has tried his children," is vocal, and well expresses the sentiment of the words. The Soprano cavatina, the Chorus, "Lord, thou rememberest the night," and the Quartett with Chorus, "So when the dread clouds," may be also accepted as favourable specimens of musician-like writing, without, however, raising the mind of the hearer to the devotional feeling of the subject. The third part, the "Reconciliation and Return to Zion," opens with another chorus of Tenors and Basses in unison, the effect of which we cannot admire, although the pitch was excellently sustained by the chorus. The "Evening Hymn" which follows, "Hark! 'tis the breeze of twilight calling," for Soprano and Tenor, is a strict canon throughout, and is unquestionably the gem of the Oratorio. So pure and melodious is the subject of this Hymn, that we have little doubt of its being detached from the work, and extensively sung in private circles. Passing over two or three pieces which call for no particular remark, we come to the concluding Chorus of the part, "Put on thy strength," in which the composer seems to have seen the necessity of introducing something like a strict *fugue*; and although we cannot say that the attempt is very successful, there is an earnestness of purpose in the writing which at once commands attention, if not admiration. In the last part, "The Promise and Song of Praise," Herr Schachner has again recourse to his unison effects for Tenors and Basses, and the Oratorio concludes with a Chorus in which the "Amen" is lengthened out with a plagal cadence, in the true conventional style of sacred *finales*.

No praise can be too great for all concerned in the execution of this work; and Herr Schachner has no right therefore to complain of his not having had a fair hearing. We admit, as we have before said, that the words of this Oratorio, being selected partly from Scripture and partly from Moore's "Sacred Songs," cannot call forth that unity of design which should animate a composer in his conception of a great work; but, judging it as it stands, we cannot but express surprise that it should have been fairly and freely chosen by those in power from amongst the many compositions of the same kind equally ready and waiting for a verdict.

A performance of the *Messiah* brought the Festival to a

close on Friday. Of the miscellaneous concerts which took place in the evenings, little need be said. They were made up of the usual stock materials, without regard to order or quantity; and if we except the successful first appearances of Miss Done (daughter of the conductor) as *pianiste*, and the Misses Phillips, (daughter of Mr. Henry Phillips) as vocalists, every artist was of sufficiently established reputation to render any notice of their efforts unnecessary.

The Festival at Norwich, which commenced on the following Monday evening, allowed but a short time for the principal vocalists to recruit their strength. With the exception of Miss Palmer, however, who was suffering slightly from hoarseness, their voices scarcely betrayed any effect of previous hard work, and they acquitted themselves throughout another arduous week to perfection. Handel's Oratorio, *Judas Maccabæus*, opened the Festival; and the next evening a miscellaneous concert took place, at which Mr. Cusins's "Wedding Serenata," was successfully reproduced. We regret that space will not allow us to dwell on the many points of interest in this work. The young composer is gradually making his way in public estimation; and we trust that his present success may shortly induce him to attempt a work in which he will not be fettered by the occasional character of his *libretto*.

On the following morning the performance commenced with M. Silas' *Joash*, a composition which has long been looked forward to with interest by all acquainted with the composer's previous efforts.

Had the author of the *libretto* (Mr. G. Linley) and the composer of the music not informed the public that this Oratorio was *not* an Oratorio, we should have been inclined on a first hearing of the work to feel that it failed to support the high character it assumed to take; but being thus disarmed, our observations must refer to it only as a "sacred drama," although we doubt whether even this name will strictly apply, for according to the composer's own words, it has not been his intention to "make sacred characters of Athaliah or the Priests of Baal." It is obvious that it is a somewhat difficult task to avoid "making sacred characters" of those already sacred; and we are therefore disposed to think that had M. Silas selected a subject in which his natural sympathies for the operatic style could have been freely indulged in, it would have been far preferable to writing a "sacred drama," with a preliminary notice to audience and critics that it is not an Oratorio.

There is much clever writing and clear instrumentation in the Overture; and the opening Chorus, "Sing and rejoice," is brilliant and well marked, in the orthodox style of sacred choral music, a merit which cannot be claimed for the Chorus of Priests of Baal in the same part, "Aid and save us," which is trifling in subject, and unredeemed by any power in orchestral treatment. The reminiscences of Mendelssohn's *St. Paul* throughout the other Choruses in the first part, seem to perplex the ear so much as to render it impossible to do full justice to some very good writing, especially in the Chorus of Levites, "In God is our salvation," (which opens with an agreeable unaccompanied chorale), the quiet Chorus of Pagan maidens, "Dry thy tears," and the last Chorus of the part, "Be thou exalted," which, besides being based upon a firm subject, is clearly written and effective in proportion. Of the choruses in the second part we prefer "O worship the Lord," which is written in six parts, and contains more real devotional feeling than can be found in any other Chorus throughout the work. The Chorus and Dance, "God save the King," is brilliant, but deficient in character. The Chorus of Baalites, "Strike, kill, burn," evidently suffers from the composer's avowed intention not to make the Priests of Baal "sacred characters," and like the other Chorus of Baalites in the first part, therefore, it is more suitable for a place in an Italian opera. The Chorus, "Stone him to death," in *St. Paul*, too, will intrude itself on our memory, not only as resembling it in character, but as affording unde-

niable proof how genius can handle a subject akin to this, in a sacred work. The Quartett with Chorus, "The Lord hath been mindful," has some good points, especially where the Chorus combines with the Solo voices; but the final Chorus, "Come let us praise," is simply a carefully written Choral exercise.

The music given to *Athaliah* is trying in the extreme; but we need not say that Madlle. Tietjens did it ample justice throughout; and if it failed to produce effect, it was the fault of the composer, and not of the vocalist. Nothing could be finer than the manner in which she attacked the difficulties in the Recitative and Air, "Lord, seest Thou not," and we only regretted that so much artistic power should have been simply wasted. We have but space to mention that *Joash*, the contralto part, was well sung, in spite of evident indisposition, by Miss Palmer, and that she created quite an effect in the placid air, "Teach me, O Lord," which will, we have no doubt, become popular. The music of *Zebiah*, mezzo-soprano, *Jehoiada*, bass, and *Ishmael*, tenor, offers little room for comment—the best pieces being a Duet for *Zebiah* and *Joash*, "Mother, forbear," and a Recitative and Air for *Jehoiada*, "God has this day."

Respecting M. Silas as a composer who has already made a reputation by a Symphony and several graceful Pianoforte works, we regret that he should have placed himself in so prominent a position without due consideration. The composer of a sacred drama like *Joash* must be content to be criticised by the highest standard, and we cannot but feel that his desire to place his work out of the pale of judgment as an oratorio, is merely an attempt to escape a difficulty which he feels that he has not strength to overcome.

The miscellaneous concert of Wednesday evening included the clever music to the *Tempest*, by Mr. A. Sullivan; and on Thursday morning *Elijah* was performed. The feature at the concert on the same evening was the production of Mr. Benedict's Cantata, *Richard Cœur de Lion*, the principal parts being sustained by Madlle. Tietjens, Miss Palmer, Mr. Sims Reeves, and Mr. Santley.

Nothing could be more refreshing, after the pretentious work to which we had been compelled to rivet our attention the day before, than the clear and musician-like writing displayed throughout this composition; which, on its own merits alone, made its way at once to the sympathies of the audience. A melodious and characteristic overture is followed by an introductory Chorus in triple measure, full of grace and elegance, and this leads to the "Page's Romance," in which the legend is related. The repetition of the major phrase by the chorus, and the immediate return to the minor, when the story is resumed by the Page, have a charming effect. The original waltz subject is then repeated to a new figure in the choral parts, and this concludes the first piece. The *Scena* of *Matilda*, which follows, is somewhat exacting to the voice, but the *Andante* and *Allegro* are well contrasted and effective. After a chorus of villagers, a graceful ballad for *Blondel* is introduced, "I wander in search of a treasure," in which the chorus, as in the opening scene, repeats the melody where it occurs in the major key. After a *Scena* for *Richard*, and an Air for *Blondel*, we come to the melody which is sung by the Minstrel under the window of *Richard*; and this graceful air is afterwards skilfully combined in a Duet with *Richard*. A Duet for Soprano and Tenor, and a fascinating *Arietta* for the Page, is followed by a Chorus of Soldiers, remarkable for its brilliancy, and one of the most spontaneous pieces of writing in the Cantata. The *finale* contains a trio for *Richard*, *Blondel*, and *Matilda*, an expressive solo for *Matilda*, and a choral repetition of *Blondel*'s air, in which joy is expressed at the restoration of *Richard* to liberty.

We cannot take leave of this Cantata without a word of praise to Mr. John Oxenford, not only for his graceful poetry, but for the ingenious manner in which he has thrown this fanciful legend into a dramatic shape. At

the conclusion, Mr. Benedict was loudly called for, and deservedly received the congratulations of the audience.

We have little to say of the other performances at this Festival, save to enter our protest against a piece of musical patchwork which was perpetrated after M. Silas' *Joash* on Wednesday morning. This was a selection from a number of *Stabat Maters*, by composers of different dates and styles, put together so as to appear like an entire work,—a piece of workmanship which no artistic mind could tolerate, whatever might be the intrinsic beauty of the separate fragments.

On Friday morning the *Messiah* was performed; and in the evening a full-dress Ball concluded the Festival, which we are happy to say has left a satisfactory profit in the hands of the committee.

TO CORRESPONDENTS.

We cannot undertake to return offered contributions; the authors, therefore, will do well to retain copies.

We would request those who send us country newspapers, wishing us to read particular paragraphs, to mark the passage, by cutting a slip in the paper near it.

Colored Envelopes are sent to all Subscribers whose payment in advance is exhausted. The paper will be discontinued where the Subscriber neglects to renew. We again remind those who are disappointed in getting back numbers, that only the music pages are stereotyped, and of the rest of the paper, only sufficient are printed to supply the current sale.

Notices of concerts and other information supplied by our friends in the country, must be forwarded as early as possible after the occurrence, otherwise they cannot be inserted. Our correspondents must specifically denote the date of each concert, for without such date no notice can be taken of the performance. All communications must be authenticated by the proper name and address of the writer.

V.P. is informed that the article "Truth about Music and Musicians" was commenced in the Musical Times, No. 163, Sept. 1856.

Brief Chronicle of the last Month.

BEAULIEU.—On Monday, the 24th of August, a festival in connection with the Vale of Avon Church Choral Society was held in the Old Church of Beaulieu. The choirs present were those of Beaulieu, Ringwood, Badderley, Dibden, Fawley, Boldre, and Netley-in-the-Marsh, and numbered in the aggregate nearly 100 voices, under the direction of Mr. E. W. Perren, organist of Beaulieu Church. The number of persons present amounted to about 1000.

BRUNSWICK CHAPEL, GT. DOVER STREET.—On Monday evening, the 14th ult., a concert of sacred music was given in the above chapel, for the benefit of Miss Deakin, who has kindly discharged the duties of organist there for the last twelve months. Mr. J. E. Minot conducted. Mr. R. Topliff presided at the organ. Miss Champion, the Misses Minot, Miss Cousens, Miss Stock, Mr. C. Jones, Mr. Ames, and Master Fay, assisted by the Choirs of Trinity and St. Saviour's churches, sang an agreeable selection of music.

CRYSTAL PALACE.—The Metropolitan Schools' Choral Society were assembled on the 12th of Sept. at the Crystal Palace, under the auspices of Mr. G. W. Martin. The Society, which consists of some five thousand voices, occupied the great Handel orchestra, and executed a variety of harmonised pieces, both sacred and secular, chiefly from the pen of Mr. Martin himself, with considerable efficiency, though with less effect than might have been looked for, considering the vast aggregate of youthful singers employed. The meeting, however, was an interesting one of its kind, and drew a large attendance of visitors.

FILEY—CONCERT BY THE BLIND.—On the 3rd of Sept. a concert was given in the Promenade Saloon, by Miss Wilson, (of St. Stephen's Choir, Hull), and Messrs. Plowman, Hird, Hudson, Holmes, and Turner, of York.

GLASGOW.—On the 27th of Aug. a meeting was held in the Queen's Hotel, for the purpose of presenting Mr. Lambeth, the city organist, with a testimonial, in recognition

of his services as a conductor. Bailie Harvey, the chairman, in presenting the testimonial, which consisted of a beautifully-wrought silver jug, and a purse containing 150 guineas, extolled Mr. Lambeth's exertions in the cause of music during his residence in Glasgow, and spoke of the great improvement made by the Choral Union under his direction. Mr. Lambeth acknowledged the receipt of the present in a few earnest and unaffected words.

HEREFORD.—On the 5th of September, the members who formed part of the Hereford Choral Society previous to its extension in the present year, showed the high sense they entertain of the advantages which, as musical amateurs, they have derived from the able services of their conductor, Mr. G. Townshend Smith, organist of the cathedral, by presenting him with a handsome testimonial, consisting of a time-piece and four photographs. The time-piece is very elegant, and beautifully executed in all its details. On the front there is some elaborate workmanship, with a lyre bearing an appropriate inscription. The photographs are those of the great masters, Handel, Haydn, Beethoven, and Mozart. The presentation was made by Mr. R. Carpenter, the secretary of the Society, and one of its oldest members, who read a complimentary address to Mr. Townshend Smith. Mr. Smith very feelingly acknowledged the pleasing manifestation of good-will conveyed to him by the presentation of the testimonial.

KIRKBY LONSDALE, WESTMORELAND.—On Sunday, Sept. 6th, a new organ, by Messrs. Foster and Andrews, Hull, with 30 stops, the noble gift of Mr. Tomlinson, of Biggin's House, was inaugurated in the parish church by Dr. Spark, organist of the Town Hall, Leeds, in a very able manner. The instrument was justly admired for its excellent quality of tone. The Choir, assisted by other neighbouring choirs, performed their respective duties on the occasion very efficiently, the services being choral throughout.

LEDGBURY.—On Wednesday, the 4th of September, two services were performed in Ledbury Church, for the purpose of inaugurating a new organ, which, by the energy and good taste of the vicar, aided by a few liberal friends, has just been placed in the west-end gallery. The organ was originally built by Elliott, of London, and has now been considerably enlarged and improved by Messrs. Nicholson, there being not more than six of the old stops retained in the instrument. It now has 1,366 pipes, and is in all respects a fine full-toned organ. The choir was assisted on this occasion by three gentlemen from Worcester Cathedral, who sung the solo parts of the music. Mr. Bather played with spirit, taste, and accuracy, and was deservedly complimented for his performance.

MANCHESTER.—A meeting was held at the Clarence Hotel, in this town, on the 23d. ult., for the purpose of raising subscriptions in support of the widow and children of the late Mr. Delavanti. A committee was appointed, with Mr. Goadsby, the late mayor, as treasurer, and £70 were contributed in the room. The committee appeal earnestly to public benevolence for prompt assistance in this case of urgent necessity.

MELBOURNE.—The Philharmonic Society of Melbourne have lately produced Mr. C. E. Horsley's oratorio *David*, which it will be recollected was performed several times in England previous to the departure of the composer for the colony of Victoria. The Society, which is conducted by Mr. Horsley, has made considerable advancement, and it is highly creditable to them that they possess capabilities for performing such an oratorio. The colonial newspapers speak of the execution of the music in terms of much praise. The orchestra was led by Mr. W. C. Fisher, an amateur, and Mr. Goold presided at the organ. There was a large assembly of musical connoisseurs from the surrounding country, and the exhibition building was well filled upon the occasion.

ORGAN APPOINTMENTS.—Miss Elizabeth Bates has been appointed organist to the Female Orphan Asylum in the